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LBJ BARES

NEW JET:

FLIES AT

2000

MPH

Speed, Height Best in World

By MARIANNE MEANS
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With Hearst Headline Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29.—President Johnson revealed today that the U. S. has added its military muscle a secret new jet which flies three times the speed of sound and flies higher, faster and performs better than any other plane in the world.

The President highlighted the development of the jet, called the A-11, at his first live televised press conference.

The President disclosed that the new jet will fly over 2,000 miles an hour for long ranges at altitudes over 70,000 feet, although the plane's specific performance is still classified.

He said the development

the jet was possible because of "major advances in aircraft technology of great significance to both military and commercial application."

The jet may have important reconnaissance possibility, for its speed far exceeds that of the

By GEORGE CARROLL

N.Y. Journal-American Aviation Editor

Development of the 2,000 mile-an-hour A-11, as announced yesterday by President Johnson, holds the potential of tipping the Cold War scales in favor of the United States.

The plane would prove of immense value defensively by enabling interception of enemy nuclear bombers out over the Atlantic Ocean, the Arctic wastes, or anywhere else far from the American mainland.

Why is this so important?

Because if aircraft carrying nuclear bombs were knocked down

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had been reasons for taking additional precautions and I asked that the matter be carefully examined and handled entirely by Mr. J. Edgar Hoover and the Secret Service."

Mr. Johnson said both the FBI Director and the Secret Service "worked closely together" on the security problem.

"We followed the suggestions outlined, none of which I am familiar with in any detail," he concluded.

The White House refused to comment on a claim by the Miami Herald that unusual security steps were taken because of the Cuban suicide pilot report.

"We are not going to comment on stories speculating about Thursday's events," Press Secretary Pierre Salinger told reporters. "The security arrangement taken were done for good and sufficient reasons. It is not in the national interest to discuss this matter further at this time."

The Herald said the Secret Service was tipped a week ago that a Castro agent might try an attack on Mr. Johnson's plane as it traveled from Jacksonville to Miami.

The Secret Service also was told, the Herald said, that the agent might try to shoot down the President's jet transport with a ground-to-air missile.

The Secret Service in Miami and Secret Service sources in Washington denied receiving such a tip.

It was noteworthy, however, that both Secret Service Chief James J. Rowley and Gerald Behn, head of the White House detail, both accompanied the President on his less than 24-hour Florida trip over Thursday and Friday.

SEVERAL PRECAUTIONS

A number of unusual security precautions were observed during Mr. Johnson's stay in Florida.

The White House declined to release the hour-by-hour schedule of his activities in advance of his departure from Washington on Thursday.

When he made an unscheduled stop at Palm Beach to visit the ailing Joseph P. Kennedy, father of the late President, Mr. Johnson unexpectedly switched from his jet to helicopter to complete the trip to Miami.

The three Army helicopters which carried the President

and his party bore no identification numbers and there was no Presidential seal on his craft. Three Air Force jet fighters accompanied the helicopters on the relatively short flight.

Mr. Johnson's landing site in Miami—a suburban golf course—was not disclosed prior to his arrival and as his limousine drove into the city, a helicopter hovered overhead.

DIFFERENT JET

Instead of using the customary Presidential "Air Force One" plane, Mr. Johnson, his wife and two daughters flew to and back from Florida in one of three Boeing 707 Air Force transports.

None was marked with the Presidential seal. This no outsider would know which was the Johnson plane. Identification marks had been painted out.

One Air Force officer at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., said after the President's return early Friday that it was the first time he had ever seen a military aircraft without its "flash number" for identification either on the fuselage or wings.

over the United States, the force of the crash might detonate the warheads with disastrous results.

Commercially, development of this supersonic transport (SST) means that the United States may be prepared to "go for broke" in

the international race to put Bomarc air defense missiles into the air the fastest passenger-carrying aircraft.

At present, the British-French entry into the commercial speed race is the Concorde, capable of doing 1,450 miles-an-hour.

The Russians are reported to have developed a commercial plane capable of traveling 1,560 miles an hour. If this country succeeds in putting its 2,000 mile-an-hour beauty into the air, we will be far ahead of our competitors.

KEY IS TITANIUM

The key to development of the A-11 is the use of titanium.

This is a metal alloy harder than stainless steel and capable of withstanding heat up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

A plane traveling 2,000 miles an hour at altitudes of 70,000 feet would generate intense heat—heat approaching the 2,000-degree-mark—because of friction created by its high speed.

Titanium has one drawback, however. It is difficult to process.

And this more than anything can probably account for the relatively slow progress in developing the A-11.

READY FOR FLIGHT?

It appears now, however, that the A-11 is almost ready to go airborne. Why else would the White House suddenly lift the veil of secrecy surrounding the A-11 program after keeping it under wraps since 1959?

A further indication that the supersonic interceptor may be operational in the near future is contained in the Defense Department's plans for the later part of 1964.

As things now stand, the department plans to close five bases that are armed with

Bomarc air defense missiles. One of the bases is located at Westhampton Beach, L.I., and another is McGuire Air Force Base near Ft. Dix, N.J.

RANGE IMPORTANT

The Bomarc has a range of between 300 and 400 miles. It appears, then, that with the A-11 capable of traveling 2,000 mph, the Defense Department is ready to give it priority over the Bomarc missile.

The J-58 engine which will power the A-11 has been developed by the Pratt-Whitney Division of the United Aircraft Corp. The contract was awarded to Pratt-Whitney for development of the J-58 in August, 1959. Even then, Defense Department officials said the engine was capable of operating at three times the speed of sound — approximately 2,000 mps.

It was Pratt-Whitney which also developed the J-57 — the engine used to power America's U-2 "spy plane."